

JOURNAL
OF
AN EXPLORATION
IN THE
SPRING OF THE YEAR 1750.

By DR. THOMAS WALKER,
OF VIRGINIA.

WITH A PREFACE BY
WILLIAM CABELL RIVES, LL.B.,
MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.
1888.

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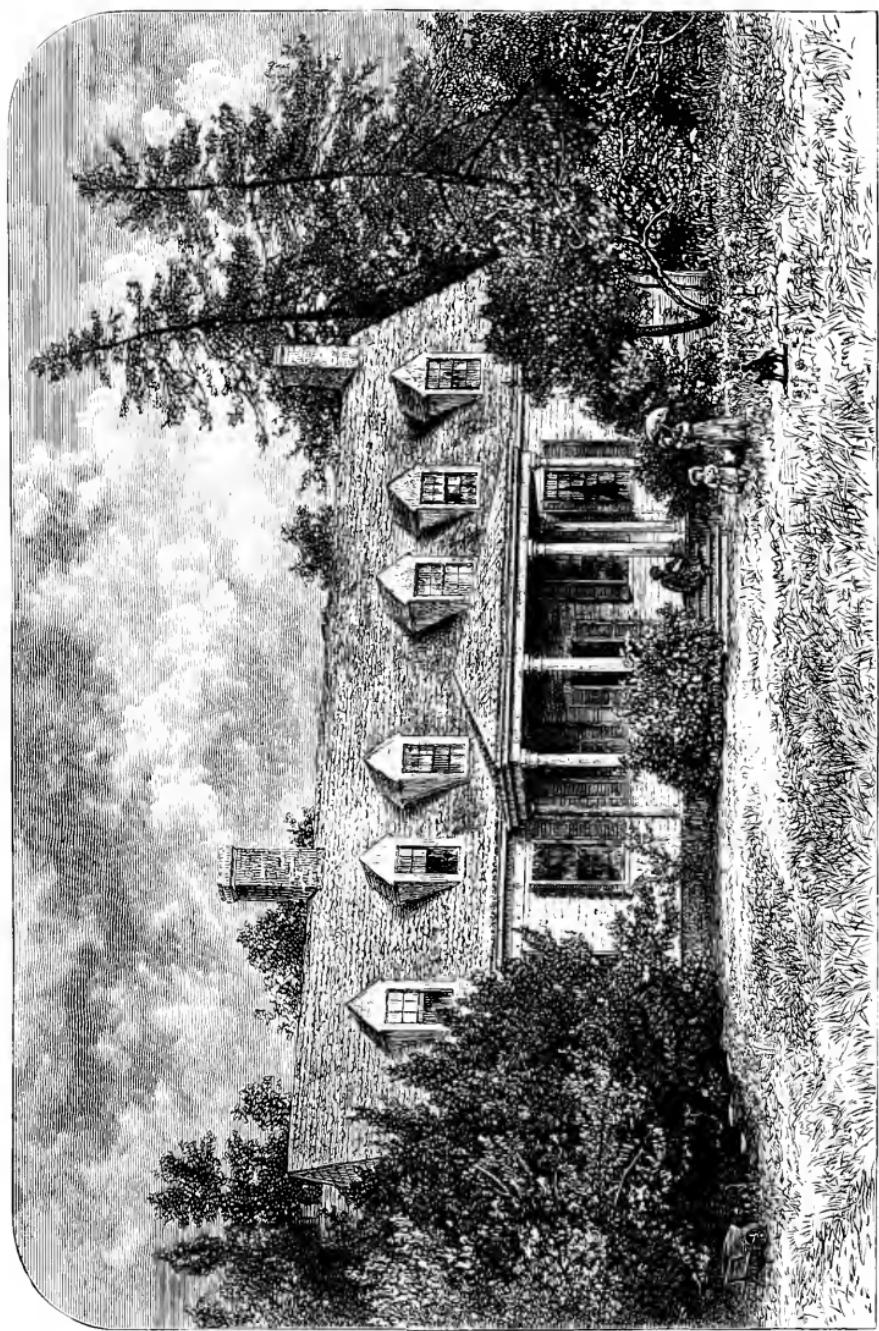
Walker, Thomas, 1715-1794.

Journal of an exploration in
the spring of the year 1750

1750

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CASTLE HILL, ALBEMARLE COUNTY, VIRGINIA. 1765.

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Ingenium nemo sine corpore exercebat; optimus quisque facere quam dicere, sua ab aliis bene facta laudari, quam ipse aliorum narrare malebat. — SALLUST.





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PREFACE.

IT has long been known to many persons interested in the early history of our country, that a manuscript Journal of Dr. Thomas Walker, of Virginia, is in existence, which gives some account of his explorations in the western part of his own State, and in a region which is now within the limits of the States of Tennessee and Kentucky.

Their natural curiosity as to this journal has been enhanced by a current statement as to the early period at which it was written,—antedating, as the time does, by nearly twenty years, the explorations of Daniel Boone and of his contemporary pioneers.

It is believed that if Dr. Walker and his companions were not the first white men who ever visited the region which they explored, they were certainly the first of whose exploration in this then unknown wilderness there is any authentic record.

It was probably during this or the earlier exploration of 1748, to which Dr. Walker refers in the Journal now published, that his name became enduringly connected with a stream and a range of mountains in southwestern Virginia, and that he gave to the Cumberland Gap and the Cumberland River the names which were at this time naturally suggested to his then loyalist mind by the decisive victory of the Duke of Cumberland,—won at Culloden on the 16th of April, 1746, over the forces of the Pretender.

The Journal begins on the 16th day of March, 1750, and ends on the next succeeding 13th day of July, covering, with one much-to-be-regretted gap of nine days, a period of nearly four months. Meagre as such a record, kept under circumstances of

continuously great exposure and fatigue, must of necessity be, it nevertheless discloses facts of much interest to the historian, the naturalist, and the geologist. It establishes the fact that the buffalo, now almost extinct even in the vast country beyond the Mississippi, and the elk, comparatively rare and fast becoming rarer in the same distant region, were in 1750 very numerous in Virginia and Kentucky. It shows also that Dr. Walker at this early date noticed and recorded the outcropping of coal in several of the places which he visited in his expedition.

It is a curious circumstance that a tomahawk bearing the initials "T. W." mentioned in this Journal as swept away by a flood one hundred and thirty-eight years ago, should have been found about a century afterwards, identified by its mark, and should now be treasured as an interesting relic of the past in Louisville, Kentucky.

The scrupulous observance of "the Sabbath" by rest, repeatedly mentioned in the

Journal, is noteworthy as a manifestation of the spirit of religious reverence which has ever been characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon in every region of the earth, and which is at once a token and a source of his robust manhood.

In printing the Journal, care has been taken to follow the author's occasionally archaic spelling and use of capital letters,—belonging, as these peculiarities do, to the time when it was written.

While the matters commented on give interest of themselves to Dr. Walker's Journal, there are some facts concerning the writer himself which largely add to the value of the record.

It is well known that the life of Thomas Walker was one of great and varied activity; but its details, as yet gathered together by his numerous descendants, are scant and unsatisfactory. It is to be hoped that from family papers in the possession of these descendants, who are now to be found not only in Virginia and Kentucky, but in Bos-

ton, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and more distant parts of the wide American domain, the scattered materials may be brought together which shall clearly show the place he is entitled to occupy in the Colonial History of Virginia and of the country.

As the Romans, in contrast to the Athenians, were, according to Sallust, more bent on action than narration, so, in their stirring lives, the leading Southern men of the Colonial period were less mindful than the Northern of their rightful place in history, and have consequently been more overlooked by posterity.

An attempt will be made, in the concluding pages of this Preface, with such fragmentary but authentic materials as it has been possible to collect, to do in a brief and imperfect way for the memory of the journalist something analogous to the work of an Agassiz in restoring an antediluvian Megatherium by a careful examination of its fossil remains.

Thomas Walker was born in King and Queen County, Virginia, on the 15th day of January, 1715.

He was married in 1741, at the age of twenty-six years, to a young widow,—six years younger than himself,—Mrs. Nicholas Meriwether, whose maiden name was Mildred Thornton. She was the cousin of George Washington, whose elder brother, Samuel, had married one of her near relatives; and in this way Thomas Walker became closely and doubly connected with the Washington family. Through this marriage he came into possession of fifteen thousand acres of land in a beautiful, well-wooded, and well-watered region of Piedmont Virginia, lying on the eastern slope of a range of mountains, known from their course as the Southwest Mountains, nearer to the sea by about twenty miles than the Blue Ridge, and rising in their highest elevation to an altitude of a little over eighteen hundred feet above tide. Here, not far from the base of Peter's Mountain, which President

Madison, who lived in full view of this monarch of the range, used playfully to call the "Chimborazo of our Andes," Thomas Walker, soon after his marriage, established the home which he was to occupy for more than fifty years.

The ownership of these broad acres had the effect of stimulating instead of repressing the varied activities of his life. The many wants prompted by an isolated and primitive mode of country life led him into a multiplicity of pursuits,—offering the greatest possible contrast to the subdivision of labor that marks the constitution of modern society.

Like Washington, with whom he owned land in common, he became a surveyor at an early age, and many still existing plats bear witness to his skill in the measurement and computation of large areas.

To his occupation as a surveyor and planter, he added the business of a merchant, and was for many years largely engaged in importing directly from the mother

country the innumerable articles needful, both for himself and others, for the cultivation of colonial plantations and the comfort of colonial homes.

Strong in body, courageous, enterprising, intelligent, his curiosity and restless energy impelled him to leave his wife and young children for a season; and, if not to forget them, yet, like the hunter in Horace, to pass his nights under the cold canopy of the skies in the unknown region beyond the mountains.

It is uncertain how early these excursions into the wilderness began; but it is positively known, as we have said, that he made one of them — and a distant one — in the year 1748, when he was thirty-three years of age.

The love of exploration and adventure grew with experience and with expanding knowledge and capacity, and, becoming a leader of men into the wilderness, Thomas Walker won the confidence of the adventurous spirits among whom he lived, and attracted the attention — especially when

frontier service involving hardship and danger was needed — of many of the successive governors of colonial Virginia.

He continued his work of surveying, planting, importing, exploring, — with some other occupations which will be noticed hereafter, — until the year 1755, when he entered on a long though interrupted and checkered career in the service of his native State.

The year 1755 proved an eventful one in his life, and some scattered notes found among his papers enable us to trace with certainty his occupations and movements at that time.

In the beginning of the year, he was at and near Winchester, in the valley of Virginia, lending vigorous aid to the preparations which were then making to break through the line of fortifications which the French were drawing from Canada obliquely across the continent, in order to check the western march of British domination.

The notes referred to show that with the rank of Major he had accepted the appoint-

ment of commissary to the Virginia troops which were to accompany General Edward Braddock's expedition to capture Fort Duquesne, and that he shrank from no fatigue or exposure in the fulfilment of his duties. We find memoranda made in 1755 of such experiences on his part as the following: "Finding ye creek up, and missing my way, I was obliged to lie without fire, liquor, or bedding." Such hardship, however, meets with occasional relief. He sets out very early the day after this unpleasant experience, travels for three hours over a mountain and several bad hills, and follows a new road for ten miles, when he reaches a human habitation. Here a widow provides him with much-needed food, and starting again he arrives at Nicholas Johnson's just as it is dark.

Soon after, he halts at Colonel Cresap's, and then he gets to the camp, where Sir John H. Clare orders him to make a preliminary trip to Pennsylvania. During his further journey he falls in with a Jew, who proves to be no disagreeable companion.

Through a violent rainstorm, and over an almost impassable road, he reaches Will's Creek, where he sees one of the wagons upset in the stream and another unable to cross. He pushes on to the appointed place of meeting in Pennsylvania, where he accomplishes the business for which he had been sent, and dines with his countryman of subsequently world-wide fame, whom he mentions as "the ingenious Doctor Benjamin Franklin."

For several months following, a veil is drawn over the details of his movements; but at last it appears that, with Washington and the Virginia forces, and with Braddock and his regulars, he has been involved in the great disaster which took place on the 9th of July, 1755.

A correspondent of Dr. Walker, living at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in a tattered but still preserved letter, joyfully expresses himself as follows, under date of the 28th of the same month,—a few weeks after the catastrophe:—

"Ye melancholy news of ye defeat was received. We then had but little hope that one of our acquaintance was safe. But about —— we were advised that yourself, Col. Washington, and many others had escaped in whole skins, which gave us inexpressible joy.

"Can it be supposed, when this story is read in ye annals of Virginia a century or two hence, that any Englishman or his posterity will believe it, when it is told that about three hundred naked French and Indians vanquished twelve or thirteen hundred regular troops, commanded by brave and experienced officers? For my own part, if such a thing was inserted in ye best Hystory in ye world, I would burn ye Book.

"My dear Friend, we have suffered for your supposed loss, and I believe it would be to ye satisfaction of every friend you have that you would resign your present employment, and sure I am your acquaintance at Castle Hill will rejoice with us."

The same kindly and humorous correspondent, in a shortly subsequent letter, makes the following reference to Mrs. Walker, who, during her husband's absence, had given birth to one of her many children, and who was — as could hardly be inferred from the language

used by the writer — but thirty-four years of age at the time of this anxious separation : “ Please to tender my compliments to your old lady, and tell her I am glad she has got you back again.”

Well-vouched-for tradition affirms that Dr. Walker escaped from the bloody rout on a cream-colored stallion which he had seized, and that he powerfully seconded the efforts of Washington in restoring order and in bringing off to a place of safety the shattered remnant of the British and Virginia forces.

Twenty-one years after the memorable disaster, he revisited the scene where it had taken place, and still found there many marks of the deadly blow which had been inflicted on Braddock’s ill-fated troops. Human bones, bleached by time and exposure, were scattered over the ground, and Dr. Walker, moved by the sight, recalled to his companions in glowing words the contrasts of the eventful day in which he had been an actor: the glittering muskets, the

bright uniforms, the martial music and array of the regulars as they had moved onward under their gallant but obstinate and reckless leader in confident expectation of the speedy capture of Fort Duquesne, and the confusion and horror which suddenly seized them as they were being hopelessly shot down, with savage yells, by their protected and hidden foe.¹

It has been doubted whether Dr. Walker was a member of the medical profession, and, in the Index to Prof. N. S. Shaler's "Kentucky," he is referred to as the *Reverend* Thomas Walker. It is beyond question that he was a physician, and not a clergyman. It is probable that he profited by whatever scant facilities were offered in his youth at the old College of William and Mary for the study of medicine, but, however this may be, his memoranda show that he compounded "electuaries," and what he describes as "a methredate to make a medicine for mad dogs,"—terms more apt to excite a smile by their

¹ See Hazard's "Register of Pennsylvania," vi. 104, 105.

alliterative quaintness than to gratify curiosity as to the ingredients of the remedy. A more conclusive proof of his being a physician is the fact that in June, July, and August, 1757, he made often-repeated professional visits to Colonel Peter Jefferson, and stood by his bedside when he died, on the 17th of August of that year.

He was, however, in his relations to the Jefferson family, more than the medical adviser of Peter Jefferson. He became the administrator of his estate and the guardian of his children. Letters from one—and the most distinguished—of these children, Thomas, expressing “unlimited confidence in his justice,” bear witness to the faithfulness with which Dr. Walker fulfilled the duties of his twofold trust. The author of the Declaration of Independence, and third President of the United States, ever gratefully remembered his early relations with Dr. Walker, and on many occasions warmly expressed the high estimation in which he held his abilities, knowledge, and character.

In a letter from Monticello, dated the 25th of September, 1783, Thomas Jefferson applies to his old friend and guardian for some notes of information in regard to the animals of America, and especially to the Indians, which he wishes to incorporate with answers to questions of Monsieur Barbé Marbois, the learned Secretary of the French Legation, and which Jefferson subsequently expanded into his celebrated "Notes on Virginia." In making these inquiries of Dr. Walker, Jefferson says that he knows "nobody else who can give me equal information on all points."

Dr. Walker's early and repeated expeditions into the unknown country beyond the mountains, his habits of close observation, his varied skill, and his frequent intercourse with the Indians, had caused him to be gradually looked on in Virginia as an expert in all questions of boundary, and in matters affecting the relations of the white inhabitants of the State with their dangerous western neighbors.

On the 17th of June, 1768, he was commissioned by John Blair, President of His Majesty's Council for Virginia, to attend, with Andrew Lewis as associate, an important Congress with the Six Nations of Indians, which was held at Fort Stanwix, New York, from the 24th of October to the 5th of November in the same year, when the treaty was signed. Dr. Walker discharged the duty to which he was appointed, and is mentioned in "The Virginia Gazette" as arriving with his party in New York on his return from Fort Stanwix.

On the 10th of October, 1774, took place at Point Pleasant, in West Virginia, at the junction of the Kanawha with the Ohio River, the memorable battle between the Indians under their chieftain Cornstalk, and the Virginians under the command of Andrew Lewis. It was strongly suspected at the time that the Indians were secretly urged on by Lord Dunmore, the last of the Royal Governors of Virginia, and that this hard-fought battle, in which the Indians

were finally routed after great loss of life on both sides, was the real beginning, rather than the skirmishes of Lexington and Concord of the following year, of the war for American Independence.

After the defeat of the Indians, Thomas Walker and John Harvie were appointed by the House of Burgesses to treat with them.

On the outbreak into avowed war, in the following year, of the long brewing dissensions between the Colonies and England, a still more important duty of the same nature awaited Dr. Walker. A member of the House of Burgesses of Virginia at the time, he was appointed — next in the order of nomination to George Washington, for whom his country had other work to do — one of the Commissioners for arranging a treaty with the Ohio Indians, whose tranquillity it was of the first importance to insure during the pending conflict with the mother country. Dr. Walker was accordingly present at Fort Pitt (the modern Pittsburgh) and, as shown by a still existing manu-

script record of the proceedings, signed by himself, Andrew Lewis, James Wood, and Adam Stephens, presided over the conferences which were held with the Indians, by both the Virginian and the Continental Commissioners, from the 12th of September to the 21st of October, 1775.

In addition to this service, for which Dr. Walker was peculiarly well qualified, he was charged with the general duties of a member of the House of Burgesses, to which, with the progress of events, speedily succeeded those of a member of the Revolutionary Convention. He was also a member of the Committee of Public Safety of Virginia,—an executive body incurring great responsibility and wielding great power in these troublous times.

In 1777 he was a member of the Council of State which was chosen by the ballot of the two houses constituting the Legislature of Virginia. Of this Council, a learned historian says: “Under the new Constitution, it consisted of eight members, who par-

ticipated with the Governor in the exercise of all the executive powers of the government, and without whose advice he could perform no official act. In the earlier times of the new government, none but such as were distinguished for patriotism, talents, and influence were chosen into the Council of State."

While Dr. Walker was strenuously exerting his own varied talents in the cause of his country in these official positions, he was made happy by learning that his eldest son, Colonel John Walker, had been taken into Washington's military family as an extra aide-de-camp, and that the leader of the American armies had expressed a high opinion of the son's "abilities, honor, and prudence."

In 1779 Dr. Walker was appointed by the Governor of Virginia chief of the Commissioners on the part of Virginia to meet the Commissioners from North Carolina, in order to run the boundary line between these two Commonwealths.

At the age of sixty-four he undertook this duty with his associate Commissioner, Daniel Smith; fixed the starting-point by astronomical observations at the end of Fry and Jefferson's previous line, and, marking a new line,—long known as Walker's line,—pushed through the wild and rugged mountainous region of southwestern Virginia and western North Carolina, to the Tennessee River; crossed the Cumberland River twice, descended it by water, and ascertained the fact—not previously known to the geographers of that day—that the parallel of $36^{\circ} 30'$ would strike the Mississippi, and not the Ohio River.

This service was begun on the 6th of September, 1779, and was completed in the spring of the following year, in spite of difficulties and dangers which would have thwarted the efforts of a less resolute spirit. A guard had been voted by the General Assembly, to protect the Commissioners from the Indians; but, in traversing the mountainous and barren region, an insuffi-

cient quantity of cane was found to support the pack-horses, and when the party in midwinter finally reached the Cumberland River, and had built canoes to carry their luggage and rest their horses, they "were frozen up more than forty days in a river never known to be frozen before."

On his return from the successful accomplishment of this arduous task, Dr. Walker was met with the orders of the Governor for the performance of other duties, and he continued actively engaged in the service of the State during the war, of which, near its close, he was to experience in person one of the exciting vicissitudes.

On the 4th of June, 1781, his home was seized at daybreak by the bold and vigorous Colonel Tarleton, who was aiming, by a swift and secret movement, to capture Governor Jefferson and the Legislature of Virginia, then assembled at Charlottesville. Lossing and other writers have given an account of this daring raid.

With the story of the surprise of the

band of patriots who, unsuspecting of danger, had gathered under Dr. Walker's roof, were intermingled reports of many incidents long the favorite theme of local tradition.

But these incidents soon dwindled in importance in the public mind amid the general rejoicing at the great event which took place in Virginia on the 19th of October, 1781, and brought to a final and successful issue the long struggle for American Independence.

Dr. Walker continued to be a member of the General Assembly of Virginia after the close of the war, and is mentioned in the Legislative Records of 1782 as member of a "committee to prepare a full and detailed vindication of the claims of Virginia to her western territory."

The mother of his children died in 1778, and he married, some years afterwards, a cousin of his first wife, who was also a near relative of Washington.

To this second wife Washington makes reference in a letter to Dr. Walker, bearing

date the 10th of April, 1784, in which he says: "I hope it is unnecessary to give you assurance of the pleasure I should feel in seeing you and my cousin here at this retreat [Mount Vernon] from all my public employments."

The shades of evening were now drawing about the active and well-spent life of the aged surveyor, planter, explorer, physician, legislator, and commissioner. He was cheered in his declining years by the happiness and prosperity of his many children, and by seeing two of his sons in distinguished public positions,—the eldest, who had been on the staff of Washington, a Senator, and the youngest a member of the House of Representatives of the United States.

At his much-loved home, Castle Hill, Albemarle County, Virginia, he had built a house in 1765, which stands to-day in excellent preservation. It is one of the few buildings still remaining on the soil of Virginia which are older than the beginning

of the War of Independence. Its northwest front, looking on the neighboring Southwest Mountains, is represented, in the frontispiece to the volume now published, by an engraving due to Mr. Whymper, of London, the intrepid climber of the Alps and of the Andes.

This house is yet the home of some of the descendants of its first owner, who do honor to their lineage. For five generations it has been a seat of hospitality and culture, and many time-honored associations now cluster about the house itself and the surrounding grounds. The slow-growing box-trees, with archway cut through their evergreen sides, which border the lawn, have climbed to the height of more than thirty feet, and tell the story, to the most casual observer, of the long years of their gradual ascent. The small panes of glass in the venerable-looking windows, and the large brass door-locks of the house, were brought from London, and are suggestive of "ye olden time" when Virginia was a colony, and looked for her supplies to the great

mother city beyond the sea. In the ample square hall, the youthful, music-loving Jefferson has played the violin while the still younger Madison has danced. Here Thomas Walker has gathered around him the Indians who had learned to know and respect him in the fastnesses of the primeval forest, and has given shelter to the Nelsons and other patriots from "the lower country" in the stormy times of the British invasion. Here the doors have opened to welcome five men who were either to be, or were actually at the time of their respective visits, Presidents of the United States, and to many others who have made their mark as statesmen, judges, diplomats, and soldiers; and here, with the flight of years, the voices of mirth have been often hushed by the coming of the footsteps of sorrow.

In this home, the birthplace of his twelve children, the old pioneer, near the end of his eightieth year, on the 9th of November, 1794, closed his eyes on earthly scenes.

He lies in the midst of a neighboring grove to which the purple redbud and the white dogwood lend in succession the beauty of their vernal bloom, and where the secular oak, the tall tulip-tree, and the fragrant wild grape make a bower for the birds which in spring and summer time ceaselessly carol his requiem.





NOTE.

THE course of Dr. WALKER'S EXPLORATION can be traced by means of a thorough knowledge of the topography of the country through which he passed, with much greater exactness than will now be attempted.

Many of the names which he assigns in this Journal to the rivers and their branches which he came upon, e. g., Powell's River, Lawless's River, Hughes River, Naked Creek, Hunting Creek, Milley's River, Frederick's River, Clifty Creek, Louisa River, will be found set down in "A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America, with the Roads, Distances, Limits, and Extent of the Settlements. Humbly inscribed to the Right Honourable the Earl of Halifax, and the other Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations by their Lordships' most obliged & very Humble Servant

"JOHN MITCHELL."

914956

The following statement is printed on the map:—

"This map was Undertaken with the Approbation & at the Request of the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations and is Chiefly composed from Draughts, Charts

and Actual Surveys of different parts of His Majesties' Colonies and Plantations in America. Great part of which have been lately taken by their Lordships' Orders and transmitted to this Office by the Governors of the said Colonies & Others.

JOHN POWNALL,

Secretary.

"PLANTATION OFFICE,
Feb'y 13th, 1755."

The identical copy of this map which was used in the negotiations for the Treaty of Peace of 1783 is preserved in the collections of the American Geographical Society in the city of New York.

On the map — for which Dr. Walker himself probably furnished some of the data — will be found noted a settlement mentioned in the Journal. Dr. Walker's name and the date 1750 are assigned to this settlement, and it is put down in the position of about $36^{\circ} 45'$ lat., and $85^{\circ} 30'$ long., in the southern part of central Kentucky.

The inaccuracies of this ancient but interesting map make it impossible to trace on it Dr. Walker's route with precision.

His general course was as follows : —

After ascending the Staunton River — the northern branch of the Roanoke — to the settlement of William English (often spelled Ingles or Inglis), he crossed the New River not far from the present village of Newbern, in Pulaski County, Virginia. Continuing in a southwest-erly direction through Virginia, he reached the junction

of the Forks of the Holston River in Tennessee. Turning in a direction somewhat north of west, and crossing the Clinch River, he came to the Cumberland River. Travelling along or near the river for some distance, he then moved northward, and, after reaching perhaps even branches of the Green and Salt rivers, turned eastward and crossed the head-waters of the Kentucky River. Thence he passed through the mountainous region of West Virginia, from which flow the sources of the Big Sandy, Guyandotte, and other rivers, and finally arrived at the junction of the Greenbrier and New River. The rest of his journey, up the Greenbrier River, Anthony's Creek, by the Hot Springs, Panther's Gap, Augusta Court-House (the modern "Staunton"), and Rock Fish Gap, to his home in Albemarle County, may be easily traced on the maps of to-day.

To avoid the confusion apt to result from the use of unscientific terms, it may be said that Dr. Walker means by "Ivy," the *Kalmia latifolia*; by "Laurel," the *Rhododendron maximum*, and by "Sycomore," of which he mentions a specimen measuring forty feet in circumference, the *Platanus occidentalis*.

By "Reeds," he means the cane, or *Arundinaria macrosperma*, which the Western pioneers largely used as food for their horses and cattle.

I am greatly indebted to my son, Dr. Rives, for the information and suggestions contained in this note.

W. C. R.



JOURNAL
OF
DR. THOMAS WALKER.

1750.

WE kept up the Staunton to William Englishes.¹ He lives on a small Branch, and was not much hurt by the Fresh. He has a mill, which is the furthest back except one lately built by the Sect of People, who call themselves of the Brotherhood of Euphrates, and are commonly called the Duncards, who are the upper Inhabitants on the New River, which is about 400 yards

16th March.

17th.

¹ Near the present village of Blacksburg, in Montgomery County, Virginia.

wide at this Place. They live on the west side, and we were obliged to swim our Horses over. The Duncards are an odd set of people, who make it a matter of Religion not to Shave their Beards, ly on Beds, or eat Flesh, though at present, in the last, they transgress, being constrained to it, as they say, by the want of a sufficiency of Grain and Roots, they having not long been seated here. I doubt the plenty and deliciousness of the Venison & Turkeys has contributed not a little to this. The unmarried have no private Property, but live on a common Stock. They dont baptize either Young or Old, they keep their Sabbath on Saturday, & hold that all men shall be happy hereafter, but first must pass through punishment according to their Sins. They are very hospitable.

March 18th.

19th.

20th.

The Sabbath.

We could not find our Horses and spent the day in Looking for them. In the evening we found their track.

We went very early to the track of our Horses & after following them six or seven

miles, we found them all together. we returned to the Duncards about 10 o'Clock, and having purchased half a Busshell of meal and as much small Homony we set off and Lodged on a small Run between Peak Creek¹ and Reedy Creek.

We got to Reedy Creek² and Camped near James M^ccall's. I went to his house and Lodged and bought what Bacon I wanted.

I returned to my People early. we got to a large Spring about five miles below Davises Bottom on Holstons River and Camped.

We kept down Holston's River about four miles and Camped; and then M^r Powel and I went to look for Samuel Stalnaker, who I had been inform'd was just moved out to settle. We found his Camp, and returned to our own in the Evening.

We went to Stalnakers, helped him to raise his house and Camped about a quarter

March 21st.

22nd.

23rd.

24th.

¹ Peak Creek enters the New River near the village of Newbern, in Pulaski County.

² Probably Reed Creek, in Wythe County.

of a Mile below him. In April 1748, I met the above mentioned Stalnaker between the Reedy Creek Settlement, and Holstons River, on his way to the Cherokee Indians, and expected him to pilate me as far as he knew but his affairs would not permit him to go with me.

March 25th.

The Sabbath. Grass is plenty in the low Grounds.

26th.

We left the Inhabitans, and kept nigh West to a large Spring on a Branch of the North fork of Holston. Thunder, Lightning, and Rain before Day.

27th.

It began to Snow in the morning and continued till Noon. The Land is very hilly from West to North. Some Snow lies on the tops of the mountains N. W. from us.

28th.

We travelled to the lower end of the Giant's Ditch on Reedy Creek.¹

29th.

Our Dogs were very uneasie most of this Night.

¹ Enters the South Fork of the Holston River a short distance above its junction with the North Fork.

We kept down Reedy Creek, and discover'd the tracks of about 20 Indians, that had gone up the Creek between the time we Camped last Night, and set off this morning. We Suppose they made our Dogs so restless last Night. We Camped on Reedy Creek.

30th.

We caught two young Buffaloes, one of which we killed, and having cut and marked the other we turn'd him out.

March 30th.

We kept down Reedy Creek to Holston where we measured an Elm 25 feet round 3 feet from the Ground. we saw young Sheldrakes, we went down the River to the north Fork and up the north Fork about a quarter of a mile to a Ford, and then crossed it. In the Fork between Holstons and the North River, are five Indian Houses built with loggs and covered with Bark, and there were abundance of Bones, some whole Pots and Pans, some broken, and many pieces of mats and Cloth. On the West Side of the North River, is four Indian Houses such as before mentioned.

31st:

we went four miles Below the North River and Camped on the Bank of Holstons, opposite to a large Indian Fort.

April ye 1st.

The Sabbath. we saw Perch, Mullets, and Carp in plenty, and caught one of the large Sort of Cat Fish. I marked my Name, the day of the month, and date of the year on Several Beech Trees.

2nd.

we left Holston & travelled through small Hills till about Noon, when one of our Horses being choaked by eating Reeds too gredily, we stopped having travelled 7 miles. Our horse being recover'd, we travelled to the Rocky Ridge. I went up to the top, to look for a Pass, but found it so Rocky that I concluded not to Attempt it there. This Ridge may be known by Sight, at a distance. To the Eastward are many small Mountains, and a Buffaloe Road between them and the Ridge. The growth is Pine on the top and the Rocks look white at a distance. we went Seven miles this day.

4th.

We kept under the Rocky Ridge crossing several small Branches to the head of

Holly Creek. we saw many small Licks and plenty of Deer.

we went down Holly Creek. There is much Holly in the Low Grounds & some Laurel and Ivy. About 3 in the afternoon, the Ridge appeared less stony and we passed it, and camped on a small Branch about a mile from the top. my Riding Horse choaked himself this Evening and I drenched him with water to wash down the Reeds, and it answered the End.

April 5th.

It proving wet we did not move.

6th.

We rode 8 miles over broken Land. It snowed most of the day. In the Evening our dogs caught a large He Bear, which before we could come up to shoot him had wounded a dog of mine, so that he could not Travel, and we carried him on Horseback, till he recovered.

7th.

The Sabbath. Still Snow.

8th.

We travelled to a river, which I suppose to be that which the hunters Call Clinches River from one Clinch a Hunter, who first found it. we marked several Beeches on

9th.

the East side. we could not find a ford Shallow eneugh to carry our Baggage over on our horses. Ambrose Powell Forded over on one horse, and we drove the others after him. We then made a Raft and carried over one Load of Baggage, but when the Raft was brought back, it was so heavy that it would not carry anything more dry.

April 10th.

We waded and carryed the remainder of our Baggage on our Shoulders at two turns over the River, which is about one hundred and thirty yards wide, we went on about five miles and Camped on a Small Branch.

*

large Roads lead to it. This afternoon Ambrose Powell was bit by a Bear in his Knee. we rode 7 miles this day.

20th.

We kept down the Creek 2 miles to the River again. It appears not any wider here than at the mouth of Clover Creek, but much deeper. I thought it proper to Cross the River and began a bark Conoe.

* A gap in the Journal occurs here.

We finished the Conoe and tryed her. About noon it began to thunder, lighten, hail and rain prodigiously and continued about 2 hours.

April 21st.

The Sabbath. One of the horses was found unable to walk this morning. I then Propos'd that with 2 of the Company I would proceed, and the other three should Continue here till our return, which was agreed to, and Lots were drawn to determine who should go, they all being desirous of it. Ambrose Powell, and Colby Chew were the fortunate Persons.

22d.

Having carried our Baggage over in the Bark Conoe, and Swam our horses, we all Crossed the River. Then Ambrose Powell, Colby Chew, and I departed, Leaving the others to provide and salt some Bear, build an house, and plant some Peach Stones and Corn. We travelled about 12 miles and encamped on Crooked Creek. The moun-tains are very small hereabouts and here is a great deal of flat Land. We got through the Coal today.

23d.

April 24th.

We kept on Westerly 18 miles, got Clear of the mountains and found the Land poor and the woods very Thick beyond them, and Laurel & Ivy in and near the Branches. Our Horses suffered very much here for want of food. This day we Came on the fresh Track of 7 or 8 Indians, but could not overtake them.

25th.

We kept on West 5 miles, the Land continuing much Same, the Laurel rather growing worse, and the food scarcer. I got up a tree on a Ridge and saw the Growth of the Land much the same as Far as my Sight could reach. I then concluded to return to the rest of my company. I kept on my Track 1 mile then turn'd Southerly & went to Cumberland River at the mouth of a water Course, that I named Rocky Creek.

26th.

The River is 150 yards wide and appears to be navigable from this place almost to the mouth of Clover Creek. Rocky Creek runs within 40 yards of the River Bank then turns off, and runs up the River, Surrounding about 25 Acres of Land before it falls into the River. The Banks of the River and

Creek are a sufficient Fence almost all the way. On the Lower side of the mouth of the Creek is an Ash mark'd T W, a Red Oak A P, a white Hiccor C. C. besides several Trees blazed Several ways with 3 Chops over Each blaze. we went up the North Side of the River 8 miles, and Camped on a Small Branch. A Bear Broke one of my Dogs forelegs.

We crossed Indian Creek and Went down Meadow Creek to the River. There Comes in another from the Southward as big as this we are on. Below the mouth of this Creek, and above the mouth are the remains of Several Indian Cabbins and amongst them a round Hill made by Art about 20 feet high and 60 over the Top. we went up the River, and Camped on the Bank.

We kept up the River to our Company whom we found all well, but the lame Horse was as bad as we left him, and another had been bit in the Nose by a Snake. I rub'd the wounds with Bears oil, and gave him a drench of the same and another of the de-

April 27th.

28th.

coction of Rattle Snake root some time after. The People I left had built an House 12 by 8, clear'd and broke up some ground, & planted Corn, and Peach Stones. They also had killed several Bears and cured the meat. This day Colby Chew and his Horse fell down the Bank. I Bleed and gave him Volatile drops, & he soon recovered.

April 29th.

The Sabbath. The bitten Horse is better. 3 Quarters of A mile below the House is a Pond in the low Ground of the River, a Quarter of a mile in Length and 200 y^{ds} wide much frequented by Fowl.

30th.

I Blazed a way from our House to the River. On the other side of the River is a large Elm cut down and barked about 20 feet and another standing just by it with the Bark cut around at the root and about 15 feet above. About 200 yards below there is a white Hiccorry Barked about 15 feet. The depth of water here, when the lowest that I have seen it, is about 7 or 8 feet, the Bottom of the River Sandy, y^e Banks very high, & the Current very Slow.

The bitten Horse being much mended, we set off and left the lame one. He is white, branded on the near Buttock with a swivil Stirrup Iron, and is old. We left the River and having Crossed Several Hills and Branches, Camped in a Valley North from the House.

Another Horse being bit, I applyed Bears Oil as before mention'd. We got to Powell's River¹ in the afternoon and went down it along an Indian Road, much frequented, to the mouth of a Creek on the West side of the River, where we camped. The Indian Road goes up the Creek, and I think it is that which goes through Cave Gap.

May the 1st.

We kept down the River. At the mouth of a Creek that comes in on the East side is a Lick, and I believe there was a hundred Buffaloes at it. About 2 o'Clock we had a Shower of rain. we camped on the River, which is very crooked.

2d.

¹ This Powell's River and Crooked Creek are in Kentucky, and are represented on Pownall's Map as flowing into what seems to be the Green River.

May 3d.

We crossed a narrow Neck of Land, came on the River again and kept down it to an Indian Camp, that had been built this Spring, and in it we took up our Quarters. It began to rain about Noon and continued till Night.

4th.

We crossed a narrow Neck of Land and came on the River again, which we kept down till it turn'd to the Westward, we then left it, and went up a Creek, which we Called Colby's Creek. The River is about 50 yards over where we left it.

5th.

We got to Tomlinson's River, which is about the size of Powell's River, and I cut my name on a Beech, that Stands on the North Side of the River. Here is plenty of Coal in the South Bank opposite to our Camp.

6th.

The Sabbath. I saw Goslings, which shows that wild Geese stay here all the year. Ambrose Powell had the misfortune to sprain his well knee.

7th.

We went down Tomlinson's River the Land being very broken and our way em-

barrassed by trees, that had been blown down about 2 years ago.

We went up a Creek on the North Side of the River.

May 8th.

We got to Lawlesses River which is much like the others. The Mountains here are very Steep and on Some of them there is Laurel and Ivy. The tops of the Mountains are very Rocky and some part of the Rocks seem to be composed of Shells, Nuts and many other Substances petrified and cemented together with a kind of Flint. We left the River and after travelling some Miles we got among Trees that had been Blown down about 2 years, and were obliged to go down a Creek to the River again, the Small Branches and Mountains being impassable.

9th.

We Staid on the River, and dressed an Elks skin to make Indian Shoes—most of ours being quite worn out.

10th.

We left the River, found the Mountains very bad, and got to a Rock by the side of a Creek Sufficient to shelter 200 men from

11th.

Rain. Finding it so convenient, we concluded to stay and put our Elk skin in order for shoes and make them.

May 12th.

Under the Rock is a Soft Kind of Stone almost like Allum in taste; below it A Layer of Coal about 12 Inches thick and white Clay under that. I called the Run Allum Creek. I have observed Several mornings past, that the Trees begin to drop just before day & continue dripping till almost Sun rise, as if it rain'd slowly. we had some rain this day.

13th.

The Sabbath.

14th.

When our Elk's Skin was prepared we had lost every Awl that we brought out, and I made one with the Shank of an old Fishing hook, the other People made two of horse Shoe Nailes, and with these we made our Shoes or Moccasons.

We wrote several of our Names with Coal under the Rock, & I wrote our names, the time of our comeing and leaving this place on paper and stuck it to the Rock with Morter, and then set off. We Crossed

Hughes's River and Lay on a large Branch of it.

There was no dew this morning but a shower of Rain about 6 o'Clock. The River is about 50 yards wide.

Laurel and Ivy encrease upon us as we go up the Branch. About noon it began to rain & we took up our Quarters in a Valley between very Steep Hills.

We crossed several Ridges and Branches. About two in the afternoon, I was taken with a Violent Pain in my Hip.

Laurel and Ivy are very plenty and the Hills still very steep. The Woods have been burnt some years past, and are now very thick, the Timber being almost all kill'd. We Camped on a Branch of Naked Creek. The pain in my Hip is something asswaged.

We went up Naked Creek to the head and had a plain Buffaloe Road most of the way. From thence we proceeded down Wolf Creek and on it we encamped.

We kept down ye Creek to Hunting

May 15th.

16th.

17th.

18th.

19th.

May 20th.

Creek,¹ which we Crossed and left. It rained most of the afternoon.

The Sabbath. It began to rain about Noon and continued till next day.

21st.

It left off raining about 8. we crossed several Ridges and small Branches & camped on a Branch of Hunting Creek. in the Evening it rained very hard.

22d.

We went down the Branch to Hunting Creek & kept it to Milley's River.

23d.

We attempted to go down the River but could not. We then Crossed Hunting Creek and attempted to go up the River but could not. it being very deep we began a Bark Conoe. The River is about 90 or 100 yds wide. I Blazed several Trees in the fork and marked T W on a Sycomore Tree 40 feet round. It has a large Hole on the N: W: side about 20 feet from the Ground and is divided into 3 Branches just by the hole, and it stands

¹ Hunting Creek, Milley's River, and Frederick's River are set down on Pownall's Map as branches of the Catawba or Cuttawa, now called the Kentucky River.

about 80 yards above the mouth of Hunting Creek.

We finished the Canoe and crossed the River about noon, and I marked a Sycamore 30 feet round and several Beeches on the North side of the River opposite to the mouth of the Creek. Game is very scarce hereabouts.

It began to rain before day and continued till about noon. We travelled about 4 miles on a Ridge and camped on a small Branch.

We kept down the Branch almost to the River, and up a Creek, and then along a Ridge till our Dogs roused a large Buck Elk, which we followed down to a Creek. He killed Ambrose Powell's Dog in the Chase, and we named the Run Tumblers Creek, the Dog being of that Name.

The Sabbath.

Cloudy. We could not get our Horses till almost Night, when we went down the Branch. We lay on to the main Creek, and turn'd up it.

May 24th.

25th.

26th.

27th.

28th.

May 29th.

We proceeded up the Creek 7 miles, and then took a North Branch & went up it 5 miles and then we encamped on it.

30th.

We went to the head of the Branch we lay on 12 Miles. A shower of Rain fell this day. The Woods are burnt fresh about here and are the only fresh burnt Woods we have seen these Six Weeks.

31st.

We crossed 2 Mountains and camped just by a Wolf's Den. They were very impudent and after they had been twice shot at, they kept howling about the Camp. It rained till Noon this day.

June ye 1st.

We found the Wolf's Den and caught 4 of the young ones. It rained this morning. we went up a Creek crossed a mountain and went through a Gap, and then, camped on the head of A Branch.

2d.

We went down the Branch to a River 70 yards wide, which I called Frederick's River. we kept up it half a mile to a Ford, where we crossed and proceeded up on the North Side 3 miles. It rained most of the

afternoon. Elks are Very Plenty on this River.

Whit-Sunday. It rained most of the day.

I blazed Several Trees four ways on the outside of the low Grounds by a Buffaloe Road, and marked my Name on Several Beech Trees. Also I marked some by the River side just below a mossing¹ place with an Island in it. We left the River about 10 o'Clock & got to Falling Creek, and went up it till 5 in the Afternoon, when a very black Cloud appearing, we turn'd out our Horses, got tent Poles up, and were just stretching a Tent, when it began to rain and hail, and was succeeded by a violent Wind which Blew down our Tent & a great many Trees about it, several large ones within 30 yds of the Tent. we all left the place in confusion and ran different ways for shelter. After the Storm was over, we met at the Tent, and found all safe.

There was a violent Shower of Rain before day. This morning we went up the Creek

June 3d.

4th.

5th.

¹ Crossing?

about 3 miles, and were then obliged to leave it, the Timber being so blown down that we could not get through. After we left the Creek, we kept on a Ridge 4 miles, then turned down to the head of a Branch, and it began to rain and continued raining very hard till Night.

June 6th.

We went down the Branch till it became a large Creek. It runs very Swift, falling more than any of the Branches we have been on of late. I called it Rapid Creek. After we had gone 8 miles we could not ford, and we Camped in the low Ground. There is great Sign of Indians on this Creek.

7th.

The Creek being fordable, we Crossed it & kept down 12 miles to a River about 100 yards over, Which We called Louisa River.¹ The Creek is about 30 yards wide, & part of y^e River breaks into y^e Creek — making an Island on which we Camped.

8th.

The River is so deep we Cannot ford it and as it is falling we conclude to stay &

¹ The West or Louisa Fork of the Big Sandy River.

hunt. In the afternoon M^r Powell and my Self was a hunting about a mile & a half from the Camp, and heard a gun just below us on the other Side of the River, and as none of our People could cross, I was in hopes of geting some direction from the Person, but could not find him. .

We crossed the River & went down it to the mouth of a Creek & up the Creek to the head and over a Ridge into a steep Valley and Camped.

Trinity Sunday. Being in very bad Ground for our Horses, we concluded to move. we were very much hindered by the Trees, that were blown down on Monday last. we camped on a Small Branch.

It rained violently the Latter part of the night & till 9 ^oClock. The Branch is impassable at present. We lost a Tomohawk and a Cann by the Flood.

The Water being low we went down the Branch to a large Creek, & up the Creek.. Many of the Trees in the Branches are

June 9th.

10th.

11th.

12th.

Wash'd up by the Roots and others barked by the old trees, that went down y^e Stream. The Roots in the Bottom of the Runs are Barked by the Stones.

June 13th.

We are much hindered by the Gust & a shower of Rain about Noon. Game is very scarce here, and the mountains very bad, the tops of the Ridges being so covered with Ivy and the sides so steep and stony, that we were obliged to cut our way through with our Tomohawks.

14th.

The Woods are still bad and Game scarce. It rained today about Noon & we Camped on the top of A Ridge.

15th.

We got on a large Creek where Turkey are plenty and some Elks. we went a hunting & killed 3 Turkeys. Hunted & killed 3 Bears & some Turkeys.

16th.

The Sabbath. We killed a large Buck Elk.

17th.

having prepared a good stock of Meat, we left the Creek crossing several Branches and Ridges. the Woods still continuing bad the Weather hot & our Horses

so far spent, that we are all obliged to walk.

We got to Laurel Creek early this morning, and met so impudent a Bull Buffaloe that we were obliged to shoot him, or he would have been amongst us. we then went up the Creek six miles, thence up a North Branch of it to the head, and attempted to Cross a mountain, but it proved so high and difficult, that we were obliged to Camp on the side of it. This Ridge is nigh the eastern edge of the Coal Land.

We got to the top of the Mountain and Could discover a flat to the South & South East. we went down from the Ridge to a Branch and down the Branch to Laurel Creek not far from where we left it yesterday & camped. my riding Horse was bit by a Snake this day, and having no Bear's Oil I rub'd the place with a piece of fat meat, which had the desired effect.

We found the Level Nigh the Creek so full of Laurel that we were obliged to go up a Small Branch, and from the head of that

June 19th.

20th.

21st.

to the Creek again, and found it good travelling a Small distance from the Creek. we Camped on the Creek. Deer are very scarce on the Coal Land, I having seen but 4, since the 30th of April.

June 22d.

We kept up to the head of the Creek, the Land being Leveller than we have lately seen, and here are some large Savanna's. Many of the Branches are full of Laurel and Ivy. Deer and Bears are plenty.

23d.

Land continues level with Laurel and Ivy & we got to a large Creek with very high & steep Banks full of Rocks, which I Call'd Clifty Creek, the Rocks are 100 feet perpendicular in some Places.

24th.

The Sabbath.

25th.

We Crossed Clifty Creek. Here is a little Coal and the Land still flat.

26th.

We crossed a Creek that we called Dismal Creek, the Banks being the worst and the Laurel the thickest I have seen. The Land is Mountainous on the East Side of the Dismal Creek, and the Laurels end in

a few miles. We camped on a Small Branch.

The Land is very high & we Crossed several Ridges and camped on a small Branch. it rained about Noon and continued till the next day.

It continued raining till Noon, and we set off as soon as it ceased and went down the Branch we lay on to the New River, just below the mouth of Green Bryer. Powell, Tomlinson and my self striped, and went into the New River to try if we could wade over at any place. After some time having found a place we return'd to the others and took such things as would take damage by Water on our Shoulders, and waded over Leading our Horses. The Bottom is very uneven, the Rocks very slippery and the Current very Strong most of the way. The River is nigh 500 yards over. We Camped in the Low Ground opposite to the mouth of Green Bryer.

We kept up Green Bryer. It being a

June 27th.

28th.

29th.

wet day we went only 2 miles, and Camped on the North Side.

June 30th.

We went 7 miles up the River, which is very crooked.

July ye 1st.

The Sabbath. Our Salt being almost spent, We travelled 10 miles sometimes on the River, and at other times some distance from it.

2d.

We kept up the River the chief part of this day and we travelled about 10 miles.

3d.

we went Up the River 10 miles to day.

4th.

We went up the River 10 miles through very bad Woods.

5th.

The way growing worse, we travelled 9 miles only.

6th.

We left the River. The low grounds on it are of very little Value, but on the Branches are very good, and there is a great deal of it, and the high land is very good in many places. We got on a large Creek called Anthony's Creek, which affords a great deal of Very good Land, and it is chiefly bought. we kept up the creek 4 miles and Camped. This Creek took

its Name from an Indian, called John Anthony, that frequently hunts in these Woods. There are some inhabitants on the Branches of Green Bryer, but we missed their Plantations.

We kept up the Creek, and about Noon 5 men overtook us & inform'd us we were only 8 miles from the inhabitants on a Branch of James River called Jackson's River. We exchanged Some Tallow for meal & parted. We Camped on a Creek nigh the top of the Alleghany Ridge, which we named Ragged Creek.

Having Shaved, Shifted, & made new Shoes we left our useless Raggs at y^e Camp & got to Walker Johnston's about Noon. We moved over to Robert Armstrong's in the Afternoon & staid there all Night. The People here are very hospitable and would be better able to support Travellers was it not for the great number of Indian Warriers, that frequently take what they want from them, much to Their prejudice.

July 7th.

8th.

July 9th.

We went to the hot Springs and found six Invalides there. The Spring Water is very Clear & warmer than new Milk, and there is a spring of cold Water within 20 feet of the Warm one. I left one of my Company this day.

10th.

Having a Path We rode 20 miles & lodged at Captain Jemyson's below the Panther Gap. Two of my Company went to a Smith to get their Horses Shod.

11th.

Our Way mending, We travelled 30 miles to Augusta Court House, where I found M^r Andrew Johnston, the first of my acquaintance I had seen, since the 26 day of March.

12th.

M^r Johnston lent me a fresh Horse and sent my Horses to M^r David Stewards who was so kind as to give them Pastureage. About 8 ^oClock I set off leaving all my Company. It began to rain about 2 in the Afternoon & I lodged at Captain David Lewis's about 34 miles from Augusta Court House.

13th.

I got Home about Noon.

We killed in the Journey 13 Buffaloes,
8 Elks, 53 Bears, 20 Deer, 4 Wild Geese,
about 150 Turkeys, besides small Game.
We might have killed three times as much
meat, if we had wanted it.





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